

**Grade:** All  
**Time:** 1 – ½ hours  
**Season:** All

## **Calling All Owls**

### **National Science Teaching Standards**

- A.** Science as **INQUIRY**
- C.** **LIFE** Science

### **Objective:**

The students will learn some of the adaptations and habits that explain nocturnal existence of the owl.

### **Pre Activity:**

- Have students (in groups) research: Great-horned owl, barred owl, screech owl. Be sure to bring that information to Springbrook for the owl calling activity.
- Discuss observation...and how it is using more than your eyes especially when observing nocturnal predators.
- Familiarize the students with key words: predator, prey, nocturnal, diurnal

### **Equipment:**

Mounted owls (great-horned, barred, screech)  
Cassette recorder  
Owl tapes

### **Procedure:**

1. Explain owls are nocturnal predators; counterparts of the diurnal hunting hawks. Have pre activity groups observe their owl; looking at: eyes, feathers, feet, wings, head. Have each group share and add information as each owl is discussed. If didn't do the pre activity, then teacher point out characteristics and share Background Information.
2. Play the owl tapes; listen to each of the owls noting the differences. Discuss the purpose of the calls (identify territorial claims and attract a mate). Try making the calls yourself.
3. Share the rules of successful owl calling: stay with the group, be quiet, walk slowly and quietly, no play.
4. Take the students out to the woodland (the fire pit areas are great so you can sit on benches).
5. Play the tapes and/or call yourself; listen for the results. These will vary with weather conditions, and the time of year.

**Post Activity:**

Encourage students to read books from the Guardians of Ga'Hoole series. These are fictional books based on much owl research. Read-aloud: *The Owl in the Shower*. This book is fictional about spotted owls. It is excellent for showing both sides of environmentalists and lumbering in the Northwest USA. After reading this book have a class debate sharing both points of view. Research what federal/state laws have been enacted to protect endangered species. All of these books are 3-6 grade level.

**Post Discussion:**

- Have students share their feelings about observing at night.
- What other nocturnal animals did you hear?
- Did the owls call back? Why or why not?
- Discuss what you think the owls were trying to communicate.
- Discuss other animals communication systems.
- Why is communication important to animals survival?